

Conference Venue: Emperors Palace

Dates: 23 – 25 October 2019

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Introduction

I had the opportunity of attending the 2019 SAMEA Conference through the scholarship opportunity that was awarded emerging evaluators who are members of SAMEA. This report articulates some of my valued experiences and lessons learnt during the conference.

Pre-Conference Workshops

Highlights:

Challenges:

Conference

Lessons learnt: I benefitted from all strands that I was partaking in during the conference. I mostly attended the M&E skills and Emerging Evaluators strands because I felt that as an emerging evaluator, it is important to understand the skills and competencies that the evaluation ecosystem needs in order for it to have a sustainable future and remain relevant in measuring and assessing the impact of socio-economic development programs.

I was challenged to consider that although the evaluation practice evolved in the developed countries

and was spread to other countries (including Africa) mainly through funder-led programmes that had to be evaluated, efforts are being made to design evaluations that are “made in Africa”. Although Evaluations made in Africa evaluations may seem like an agenda that is far-fetched, I picked up that when designing and commissioning evaluations, both evaluators and commissioners can try to consider contextual issues that are relevant in the African context, for example, in order to produce relevant evaluation findings.

Challenges: I did not experience any challenges per say, but I would like to urge the SAMEA team to try and ensure that all conference activities are held during the day. I personally missed some sessions

that happened late at night, I would have loved to attend them, if they were held during the day.

Although this may be due to the limited time to accommodate all sessions during the day, maybe something can be done about timing the sessions to avoid late sessions. I understand that this may not

be possible, it might mean the conference is held over more days, it would be great to have an opportunity to attend all sessions, for mostly those who can't afford to sleep over the conference venue.

Networking: I had an opportunity to meet most evaluators in the field, most of them would be the authors and mentors that myself, as an emerging evaluator aspire to be. If it was not for the conference, I might not have met or engaged with these individuals. So yes, the conference was a great networking opportunity.

Next steps: I plan to learn more and apply the knowledge I have learnt into the evaluation work I do. I

plan to get more opportunities that will give me the skills and open up more opportunities to become a

seasoned evaluator.